

## OFFICIAL DENIES UNIVERSITY SPIES

### Calls 'Simpatico' Social Research In Latin America

By HENRY L. TREWHITT  
(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, Feb. 5—The American University here denied today suggestions that its special operations office conducts espionage for the United States Army in Latin America.

A statement from the special office said in effect that its studies in behavioral science are conducted with the cooperation of the host governments and that most of its work is not secret.

Dr. William A. Lybrand, deputy director of the office, complained that press reports from Bogota last week "gave the false impression that the university research task Simpatco was a cover for espionage operations in Latin America."

#### Eager To Explain

University officials appeared eager to explain the operation after the Defense and State Departments stopped them from answering questions yesterday. They apparently were concerned at the suggestion that Simpatco might be equated with Operation Camelot, which was canceled in Chile after some criticism last year.

A leftist member of the Legislature in Colombia charged earlier this week that Simpatco was a new form of "political-military intervention by the United States."

Lybrand, in effect, called the charge nonsense. Simpatco, he reported, was a study "to determine how effective or ineffective various public service-civic action projects of the Colombian Government have been in improving the lot of the villagers for whom whom they have been conducted."

#### Under Army Contract

Camelot had been described as "an effort to isolate the factors making for revolutionary change in the developing nations of the world, and the means by which the Communists capitalizing on these factors try to take over a country or foment a Vietnam-style war."

The university's Special Operations Research Office — SORO — conducts social studies under contract to the Army office of research and development. Lybrand said that office "has requested of

SORO only scientific research, not espionage."

The project in Colombia includes study of medical care, road building and water supply, services provided to villagers by the Army, he reported, and "similar non-military communal action programs of other components of the Colombian Government are being studied as well."

Moreover, he said, "the project was undertaken by the American University with the consent and cooperation of the Colombian Government with the concurrence of the United States Department of State."

Further details will be issued here following an expected explanation of the project in Bogota by the Colombian Government, he announced.

Lybrand said his office will continue to conduct "objective scientific studies requested by the Army and supported by defense funds which SORO believes to be in the best interest of the United States Government and people."

#### No Military Interference

"SORO's military research sponsor has never interfered with the professional independence of SORO by dictating what the scientific results of its studies should be in advance," he continued.

"Whenever SORO studies involve working with the Government of any foreign nation at their request, SORO has acted and will continue to act in what it believes to be the best interest of those countries as well."

"Under no circumstances has SORO or would SORO conduct research in violation of the sovereignty of any nation," Lybrand said.

Spokesmen said the university is "deeply disturbed by inferences seemingly invited by recent press articles that other, less proper, or even covert policies are in effect at SORO."